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ΠΕΡΙ ΝΑΡΚΙΣΣΟΥ

1.

One thing you know about me already
I don't do what I'm supposed to do,
I don't fall in love with images,
I fall in love with something worse
holy and original the light
behind the image that makes its shape
show, I walk right through you,
I break mirrors.

2.

So you really don't know me at all—
you use my name to mean self-love
when the opposite is true.
If there is such a thing as true.
If there is such a relation as opposite.
There is only statement and silence.
This is silence.

I would go anywhere
to get away from me. And always did.
I fall right through me
and break the stupid water.

3.

Don't put a name to me

you'll get it wrong.

You always did. I did it too.

I came through the door and you said J,

how good to see you. But I am N,

I said, not J at all—

but both of us were wrong.

It turns out that of all the names

of persons, places, things, that we call out

only a very few are right.

And fewer still are true.

S had a bicycle repair facility in the basement.

S had a dozen identical pairs of hand-made shoes.

4.

That's one theory. Another

says that all the names are accurate,

only we are wrong.

We fail our names

and myth begins.

The poisoned honey we feed our young.

5.

Pressed against the garden wall
I felt my skin feel its old brick
warm in the sun but still held
the elemental cook of clay.
Pressed against the air I felt my eyes
watering with sight. This is light,
I said, this interference, this god.

The only way to call me is to weep,
the god said.

Have I forgotten
where I was going? Where do you go
when you pass through the wall,
the meadow opens, children
are playing with their little dogs
dear god who makes me see, tell me
why there are animals and not me?
Why can't I be as they are, found
in the moment absolute and all else gone.
I swelter in the fur of memory. Of being me.

6.

I knew too many names.
And if I walked out in the dew
who would listen? I am tired of calling,

I will walk through the broken mirror
and find out who's in the other room
assuming there's always another room
in this hotel, a newspaper propped against a door,
a small boy trotting down the corridor.
Some of all this *has* to be me—
a clue at least to a less ridiculous
identity. What I seem to be
may satisfy you, it doesn't satisfy me.
There, that's the blindman's finger-painting
of the face of God. That's the pennywhistle
lost in the orchestra, some idiot who thinks
he has a life and tells about it day by day.

No names. Everything we see
is asleep already, waits
for us to wake, and wake them,
the hundred thousand things
calling out their lying names in their sleep.

7.

No wonder I fell through the image
to find love.
No wonder I tried to reach the place
where no one thinks himself to be
other than a reflection. No wonder

I am still falling
through the space that you call water,
falling through the image of a face
and all faces
to find (you say) the one I am.
But I say I will find the one who is.

7 May 2009

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My first morning on the deck
the crows
complain though

this time is theirs
this lawn
they strangely graze

and they quoted to me
from the crows' bible:
the night remembers me

and dawn speaks my name.

8 May 2009

= = = = =

Willing enough to despair
because the venture succeeded
and left him goalless, a glib
suicide among so many
afternoons — tristesse
is a *disease*, do you understand,
a man's mood a man can cure.

Sadness. Depletion. Lilies
losing petals overnight,
you find them on the oval table,
wide-open hands of those who fall.

It's like a headache of the soul,
it needs bitter willow of its own,
salix for sadness, homeopathic tree.
long luxury of leaves we call 'weeping.'

Sit beneath her tresses till you giggle
tickled by the silliness of things,
especially the silliness of feelings.
Leave shiver around you. Somewhere
a breast knows how to give milk.
Think about milk.

8 May 2009

=====

Not much to say — it's all
remembering anyway.

8.V.09

LOVE SONG

Tell me you love me
call me a grey wooden fence
between you and the rest of the story

Starburst. Get published,
walk along the pebble beach.
There are no more dragons.

Far out a scow scrapes the horizon.

8 May 2009

= = = = =

Start something again, be fox.
Do not account for your nights.
A ship's lost in the Straits of Sunda—
you need a new skin to write about,
my old portolan map no longer shows
the way to you, the creases
are clearer than its inscription
and there are no words. For all I know
this may be where I am already.
But I cannot see your eyes.

8 May 2009

Waiting

all morning for the moon
to rise, the sun begin to rain.
They call it adolescence
but it never ends.

8 May 2009

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As you of all people
surely must know
breaking a heart's
the only way to make it grow.

9 May 2009

SAWKILL

The mourning dove is working hard outside.
Someone across the stream is staring
up at the May Pole trying to remember.

What do we do with such things? What does a staff
uplifted mean? What is the meaning of dance?
What are we here to do?

The stream hurries by immaculately answering.

9 May 2009

= = = = =

Some stars are better than others.

Some hearts have wings.

She lost her diamond ring

among the breakfast things,

found it at lunchtime, put it on,

wore it all through evening then

gave it to a friend before she slept.

Gentlemen scholars, what is this ring?

The Sanhedrin were silent.

One thought it was going to rain.

9 May 2009

COMPLICATIONS KNOW US ALL TOO WELL

Switch pronouns in mid-sentence,
wind up married to your aunt,
your girl friend's brother, the family priest.
Many a man has paused to wonder
between the eighth green and the sand trap
how did I get here? What does golf mean?
What was I thinking when I thought
it would lead me methodically hole by hole
somewhere I thought to travel, deep
into the promised land of mainstream prose
where all the nice novels live, full
of people I would like to be? The one
good thing about exercise is it can stop,
the treadmill switched off, the golf clubs
closeted or broken one by one over
your aging, aching knee. That's more
than you can say about eating, never ends,
or other people's wives. Or the sky.

9 May 2009

MISSIONARIES

We may have forgotten how to do it by now—
missionaries explained a lot of the words
but not how to whisper them into the leaves
then seethe the leaves in the blood of what
kind of beast — they know nothing at all
but they made us forget what we did know.
I suppose that's why they were sent here,
to strip us of the machinery of life, soul,
bauxite, rubber trees, emeralds, anthracite.
Maybe most of all they wanted what we knew—
why did we give up what we knew so well,
did we really know it? Maybe we too
were as ignorant as they are, maybe now
all we have left is to do as they do, sell
them our ignorance, make them rush to buy
our mushrooms sick with visions,
our shaman trances, our ugly dances,
then we too can rule the world. But what
would we do with the world when
already we've forgotten what it means to do?

9 May 2009

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And did I bear *white light*
into my heart like a hunter
carrying home a wounded deer
he thought to kill but spared

and now the wounded animal
limps around his cabin
marveling at the fireplace
a useful fire well-contained

that somehow —the hunter
sees it in her eyes— reminds
her of herself and what she is
and why she came into his life.

10 May 2009

BEARING

Bearing in. Bearing down.

And being born.

These are miracles enough—
but isn't there another way?

*

Utterly abstain from animal.

Not just from eating animal,
abstain from *being* animal.

Then who would I be?

No eating, no begetting,
would death also vanish with that trinity?

10 May 2009

WRITING :

Sweeping up the night word by word.

Getting some silence ready
to face the new day. Silence
to speak it right.

10 May 2009

SLOWLY THE DREAM REMEMBERS

In my arms I carried the slightly wounded girl—just a twisted ankle— over to the stone bench. I went and got my car, brought it by, lifted her in, drove her home, carried her in, tucked her in, smiled, she smiled, I went away.

Long after waking, I think now of the deer I had been writing about right after I woke up, before any of the wounded girl dream came back.

Did the woman I carried and forgot then turn into the deer I thought I imagined?

No one is ever ready for the dream that comes to him. Ever unprepared, we stumble through the dream and later make what sense of it we can.

Was it my soul I carried into her own house? Why did I leave? That must become my cabin, I must dwell with her and nurse her back to health.

Soul just a little wounded, a little twist.

Sunday, 10 May 2009